

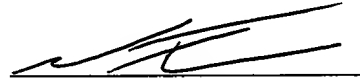
REMARKS

As set forth in MPEP §803, if the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though the application contains claims to independent and distinct inventions.

While the application may contain patentably distinct species for at least the reasons given by the Examiner, with respect to at least Species Ia (Claim Nos. 1-3, 5, 16, and 17) and Species Ib (Claims 9 and 20-24), Applicant believes that simultaneous examination will not present an undue burden. Under such circumstances, the Examiner is encouraged, at a minimum, to maintain all claims of Species Ia and Ib in the same application.

Early and favorable consideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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